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Spider Egg-Sacs

By EDDIE W. WILSON

SPIDER'S webs differ greatly in beauty, size and shape. Likewise their egg-sacs or cocoons vary from a simple mass of silk fastened to a board or stone to an elaborate affair which makes one again wonder at the ingenuity of its maker. A search for these will well repay the lover of the curious and the wonderful. And housewives, together with Nature observers, are aware that these bits of architecture are to be found in all kinds of unexpected places.

The sphere is a popular form of sac. This may be simply enmeshed in a frail support of web or it may (like those in the illustration) have a handle-like projection, making the whole closely resemble an old-fashioned gourd. Sometimes there is a series of sacs—one spun to another like the row of cells in a mud-dauber's nest. Other sacs remind one of bags or of withered fruits.

If you will pull open one of these sacs, you will be surprised at the toughness of its walls. These consist of several layers of a special kind of silk produced only by the females. As the wall breaks, out will fall either a mass of eggs or a host of tiny spiders which will scamper off in all directions. Some baby-spiders leave the sac immediately after hatching; others remain for a certain period, feeding upon their weaker brothers and sisters.